

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended) A computer-based method for providing guidance to a purchaser for selecting an appliance that requires venting of air relative to a building structure where the appliance is located, the guidance comprising recommendations that take into account physical constraints regarding an external venting structure for relative to the appliance, at least some of said venting structure disposed through said building structure, the method comprising:

providing a database for storing appliance-related information including a respective identifier for each appliance, the appliance-related information further including venting requirements data for each appliance;

configuring a vent wizard to provide a set of prompts over a communications network to elicit information from the purchaser regarding a respective appliance of interest to the purchaser, and vent parameters indicative of the physical constraints for the venting structure for the appliance;

accessing the database in view of the information supplied by the purchaser;

processing the information supplied by the purchaser relative to the vent requirements data for the appliance of interest to determine a recommendation to the purchaser regarding suitability of the external venting structure relative to the appliance of interest, wherein the recommendation is selected from at least one of the following: 1) indicating changes to be made to the external venting structure that would make the external venting structure suitable for meeting the air flow requirements of the appliance of interest; and 2) indicating to the purchaser whether or not the external venting structure presently meets one of a plurality of predefined air flow ranges relative to the appliance of interest, each of said air flow ranges indicative of a predefined distinct condition of venting for the appliance of interest; and

transmitting the recommendation to the purchaser so that appropriate action may be taken by the purchaser regarding the selection of the appliance and/or venting structure.

2. (previously presented) The computer-based method of claim 1 wherein the processing of the information supplied by the purchaser relative to the vent requirements data comprises:

generating air flow data indicative of air flow supportable by the venting structure based on the vent parameters supplied by the purchaser;

comparing the air flow supportable by the venting structure relative to air flow actually required by the appliance of interest; and

determining the suitability of the venting structure for the appliance of interest based on the results of the comparison.

3. (currently amended) The computer-based method of claim 1 wherein the predefined distinct condition of venting for the appliance of interest is selected from the group consisting of a fully acceptable venting condition, a marginally acceptable venting condition, and an unacceptable venting condition~~recommendation comprises indicating to the purchaser that the venting structure, based on the vent parameters supplied by the purchaser, is within a predefined acceptable range relative to at least one model for the appliance of interest.~~

4. (canceled)

5. (canceled)

6. (previously presented) The computer-based method of claim 1 wherein the recommendation comprises indicating to the purchaser that the venting structure, based on the vent parameters supplied by the purchaser, is unsuitable to the appliance of interest, and further comprises indicating to the purchaser alternative appliance choices that would be suitable for the venting structure.

7. (original) The computer-based method of claim 1 wherein the vent parameters are selected from the group consisting of length of the vent, number of turns along the vent, turn angle, and dimensions of a vent outlet cover.

8. (canceled)

9. (previously presented) The computer-based method of claim 1 further comprising issuing a document certifying that the venting structure, based on the vent parameters supplied by the purchaser, is within a predefined acceptable range relative to at least one model for the appliance of interest.

10. (original) The computer-based method of claim 1 wherein the appliance is selected from the group consisting of a drier, a range hood, and exhaust fan.

11. (currently amended) A computer-based system for providing guidance to a purchaser for selecting an appliance that requires venting of air relative to a building structure where the appliance is located, the guidance comprising recommendations that take into account physical constraints regarding an external venting structure for relative to the appliance, at least some of said venting structure disposed through said building structure, the system comprising:

a database for storing appliance-related information including a respective identifier for each appliance, the appliance-related information further including venting requirements data for each appliance;

a vent wizard configured to provide a set of prompts over a communications network to elicit information from the purchaser regarding a respective appliance of interest to the purchaser, and vent parameters indicative of the physical constraints for the venting structure for the appliance; and

a processor configured to access the database in view of the information supplied by the purchaser and process the information supplied by the purchaser relative to the vent requirements data for the appliance of interest to determine a recommendation to the purchaser regarding suitability of the external venting structure relative to the appliance of interest, wherein the recommendation is selected from at least one of the following: 1) indicating changes to be made to the external venting structure that would make the external structure suitable for meeting the air flow requirements of the appliance of interest; and 2) indicating to the purchaser whether or not the external venting structure presently meets one of a plurality of predefined air flow ranges relative to the appliance of interest, each of said air flow ranges indicative of a predefined distinct condition of venting for the appliance of interest.

12. (previously presented) The computer-based system of claim 11 wherein the processor configured to process the information supplied by the purchaser relative to the vent requirements data comprises:

a calculating module configured to calculate air flow data indicative of air flow supportable by the venting structure based on the vent parameters supplied by the purchaser;

a comparator configured to compare the air flow supportable by the venting structure relative to air flow actually required by the appliance of interest; and

a module configured to determine the suitability of the venting structure for the appliance of interest based on the results of the comparison.

13. (canceled)

14. (currently amended) The computer-based system of claim 11 wherein the predefined distinct condition of venting for the appliance of interest is selected from the group consisting of a fully acceptable venting condition, a marginally acceptable venting condition, and an unacceptable venting condition~~recommendation comprises indicating to the purchaser that the venting structure, based on the vent parameters supplied by the purchaser, is within a predefined acceptable range relative to at least one model for the appliance of interest.~~

15. (canceled)

16. (canceled)

17. (previously presented) The computer-based system of claim 11 wherein the recommendation comprises indicating to the purchaser that the venting structure, based on the vent parameters supplied by the purchaser, is unsuitable to the appliance of interest, and further comprises indicating to the purchaser alternative appliance choices that would be suitable for the venting structure.

18. (original) The computer-based system of claim 11 wherein the vent parameters are selected from the group consisting of length of the vent, number of turns along the vent, turn angle, and dimensions of a vent outlet cover.

19. (canceled)

20. (previously presented) The computer-based system of claim 11 further comprising a certifying module configured to issue a document certifying that the venting structure, based on the vent parameters supplied by the purchaser, is acceptable relative to at least one model for the appliance of interest.

21. (original) The computer-based system of claim 11 wherein the appliance is selected from the group consisting of a drier, a range hood, and exhaust fan.

22. (previously presented) The system of claim 11 further comprising a module configured to communicate the recommendation to the purchaser regarding the selection of the appliance and/or venting structure.